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House of Representatives

The House met at 10 a.m. and was called to order by the Speaker pro tempore (Mr. COLLINS of New York).

DESIGNATION OF SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore laid before the House the following communication from the Speaker:

WASHINGTON, DC,
July 9, 2013.

I hereby appoint the Honorable CHRIS COLLINS to act as Speaker pro tempore on this day.

JOHN A. BOEHNER,
Speaker of the House of Representatives.

MORNING-HOUR DEBATE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 3, 2013, the Chair will now recognize Members from lists submitted by the majority and minority leaders for morning-hour debate.

The Chair will alternate recognition between the parties, with each party limited to 1 hour and each Member other than the majority and minority leaders and the minority whip limited to 5 minutes each, but in no event shall debate continue beyond 11:50 a.m.

AFGHANISTAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JONES. Mr. Speaker, I'm going to be on the floor again talking about the failed policy in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, most people in my district know that I've signed over 11,000 letters. They're condolence letters to families who've lost loved ones in Afghanistan and Iraq because of the unnecessary war we fought in Iraq. In the last 2 weeks, we were home for the July 4 break. There were two week-

ends. I've signed 16 letters to families in this Nation who have lost loved ones in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, it's almost like we in Congress don't know we're still at war; yet there are young men and women dying in Afghanistan and being wounded every day. The American people do not understand why we continue to fund this failed policy in Afghanistan. Each and every day the failures become clearer and clearer to the American people, but not to Congress.

Most recently, Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction John Sopko warned that the Pentagon is moving ahead with plans to spend \$771 million on aircraft, including 30 Russian helicopters for an Afghan military team. This purchase comes despite the fact that only seven of 47 Afghan Air Force pilots are qualified to fly the helicopters. As reported by CNN, an audit by Mr. Sopko explained that the reason so few pilots are able to fly the aircraft is that "it's difficult to find literate recruits who don't have links to insurgents or criminals."

Mr. Speaker, that should wake up the Congress, if nothing else.

Unfortunately, this is only one of many examples of American money being wasted in Afghanistan. I've written multiple letters requesting a hearing to allow Mr. Sopko to testify before the House Armed Services Committee regarding this and other findings that he has made in Afghanistan and the abuse of American funds, but to my knowledge a hearing has not been scheduled. I will continue to push the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, which I serve on.

Mr. Speaker, what is so sad, truthfully, is for the American taxpayer, that their Representatives in Washington will continue to spend money in Afghanistan with very little accountability. The American people are tired of this war in Afghanistan, and they're tired of seeing young men and women coming back in flag-draped coffins.

While this administration is in the final stages of negotiating a bilateral security agreement with Afghanistan, Congress has had no debate on this strategic agreement. I realize that the President is not required to come before Congress for approval, but it is that we in Congress should have the concern that we would bring up the issue itself and debate it and vote up or down whether we should stay in Afghanistan for 10 more years.

Mr. Speaker, before closing, I want to remind that in these 16 letters that I signed in the last 2 weeks, some of these letters were addressed to children, whether it be two, three, four children, to say that I'm sorry that your father, your brother, your sister, or your mother has been killed in Afghanistan.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I ask God to please bless the men and women in uniform, to bless the families of our men and women in uniform, in His loving arms to hold the families who have given a child dying for freedom in Afghanistan and Iraq.

I ask God to bless the House and Senate, that we will do what is right in the eyes of God. I will ask God to bless the President and give him the courage to do what is right for the American people.

And three times I will say, with the greatest respect, God, please, God, please, God, please, continue to bless America.

GUN VIOLENCE IN CHICAGO

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, entire neighborhoods in my city of Chicago are being torn apart by violence.

Last week, from Wednesday evening through Sunday evening, more than 70 people were shot in Chicago, 11 of whom died. Last year, over 500 people

□ This symbol represents the time of day during the House proceedings, e.g., □ 1407 is 2:07 p.m.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.



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